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Title of Invention: Day Care Sleeper

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DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

5 This invention relates generally to the sleeping pads, and more particularly to sleeping pads with integrated pillows and blankets.

Related Art

10 Typically in day care centers, the children's need for nap-time is accommodated with a center-supplied floor mat and a blanket brought from the child's home. Because the mats are usually used repeatedly by many different children without regular washing or disinfecting, they fail to offer a clean, healthy environment for sleeping children.

15 *Witcoff* (U.S. Pat. No. 1,925,358) discloses a sleeping pad designed to be placed on a couch or similar piece of furniture to create an improved sleeping surface. It contains an end-pocket into which the rest of the pad may be rolled up when not in use, and into which a pillow may be inserted while in use.

Scheer (U.S. Pat. No. 3,579,675) discloses a child's sleeping bag with an attached ornamental pillow. The bag is also equipped with ties and a handle for use when the bag is rolled up.

Knobelock (U.S. Pat. No. 4,601,076) teaches a sleeping apparatus with a foam pad and an unattached pillow. A blanket is permanently sewn to the bottom end of the sleeping pad. The apparatus is designed to be rolled up and secured with attached ties.

It is an objective of the present invention to provide a washable day-bed to create a comfortable, clean sleeping environment. It is also an objective of the present invention to create a day-bed that is easily transported and compactly stored. Another objective of the invention is to create a day-bed with a blanket that will remain in place, but is not confining on the sides. Further objectives and advantages of the present invention will be made apparent by the accompanying drawings and description.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A sleeping pad according to the invention is a safe, non-confining pad with pillow and blanket that are particularly effective for children and daycare use. The sleeping pad includes a pillow, detachable cover or blanket that is non-confining, and a storage pouch that also may double as a pouch for receiving a child's feet during a rest or nap period. For storage, the preferred pad and blanket may be rolled or folded together and then rolled or stuffed inside the storage pouch.

The preferred storage pouch is a pocket equal in width to the sleeping pad and placed at the bottom end of the sleeping pad; the sleeping pad and blanket are preferably rolled from their top edges toward their bottom edges and rolled into the storage pouch. The preferred system for closing the pouch comprises cooperating hook-and-loop fasteners located on the back of the sleeping pad and just inside the opening of the storage pouch. A handle may be positioned on the outside of the pouch for easier carrying.

The preferred blanket detachably attaches to the sleeping pad at or near the bottom end of the sleeping pad. This may be done via cooperating hook-and-loop fasteners located near the bottom edge of the blanket and inside the opening of the storage pouch, so that the blanket extends into, and is attached to, the interior of the pouch during use. Preferably, the hook-and-loop fastener on the inside of the pouch, which connects to the blanket during use, is also used to

close the pouch around the rolled-up pad and blanket during storage. Preferably but optionally, portions of the blanket may fold under the pad and fasten to the underside of the pad to provide additional securement of the blanket during use or to meet with the user's/day-care provider's preferences. Optionally, a zipper or similar device may be placed on one or more edges of the sleeping pad to allow the padding to be removed during washing. The preferred material for the pad is water resistant to reduce or prevent liquid absorption from spills or bed-wetting, or, alternatively, a soft polyester material such as often used in sleeping bags.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the invented day care sleeper shown lying flat with an occupant.

Fig. 2. is a side view of the embodiment of Fig. 1 with a blanket attached and spread over the sleeping mat.

Fig. 3 is a top view of the embodiment of Figs. 1 and 2 with the sides of the blanket not tucked under the mat or attached to the back of the mat. The pouch closure strip 21 and the blanket attachment strip 32 are intentionally shown not properly aligned so that both may be displayed.

Fig. 4 is a bottom view of the embodiment of Figs. 1, 2, and 3.

Fig. 5a is a detail bottom view of the blanket from the embodiment of Figs. 1-4.

Fig. 5b is a detail top view of the blanket from the embodiment of Figs. 1-4.

Fig. 5c is a detail side view of the blanket from the embodiment of Figs. 1-4.

Fig. 6 is a perspective view of the embodiment of Figs. 1-4 shown rolled up. The pouch closure strip 21 and the back closure strip 22 are intentionally shown not properly aligned so that both may be displayed.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to the figures, there is shown one, but not the only, embodiment of the invented sleeping pad 10. The preferred sleeping pad 10 comprises a mat 11, integral pillow 12, and an integrated storage pouch 20, and a detachable blanket 30. A handle 23 is positioned on the outside of the storage pouch 20 for more convenient carrying. The preferred blanket 30 connects at or near the foot of the sleeping pad, but is preferably unattached along the sides.

Referring to Figures 1 and 2, the preferred mat 11 serves as a cushioned or soft base onto which other features are attached. Pillow 12 is built into mat 11, at about the head of the sleeping pad 10 by adding extra padding to the mat 11. This construction of the pillow being integral with the mat reduces the number of separate pieces and the likelihood of one becoming lost or switched with another child's pillow. Alternatively, the pillow may be made to be separate from the mat, but, preferably, the pillow is at least temporarily fastened onto the mat, for example, by hook-and-loop fasteners. Storage pouch 20 is located at the foot of the sleeping pad 10, and typically extends longitudinally about ¼ of the way (preferably in the range of 1/6 – 1/3 of the way) to the top end of the mat 11. A blanket 30 attaches to the open end of the storage pouch 20 and extends up to about the pillow 12. A zipper 15 may optionally be placed on one or more sides of the mat 11 to allow removal of the padding during washing of the sleeping pad.

Referring to Fig. 1, the preferred embodiment is shown in use. The blanket 30 attaches at one end to the mat 11, preferably via attachment to the pouch 20. The other sides of the blanket 30 remain unattached, as illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2, so that the user is covered, but not confined. Optionally, portions of the blanket may be tucked under the mat 11, for example, bottom corners 35 of the blanket may be tucked under the mat and may even be attached to the underside of the mat, if desired, especially for smaller/shorter children. Still, however, substantially all of the side edges 130 of the blanket are not attached to the mat or pad and are not typically "tucked" under the mat, in order to prevent the child from feeling confined or trapped. By "substantially all" of the side edges 130 is meant that preferably at least 80 percent of the length of the side edges 130 is unattached to the mat.

The invented sleeping pad has no enveloping structure that might cover up or trap a child in a tight, dangerous situation. The mat is not a conventional, folded-over sleeping bag, which receives a child between an upper and a lower half, but instead is a single mat without any flaps extending over the child from the side. While the pouch extends over the mat, it extends only a very short distance—about 1 to 1½ feet—and could not trap a child. While the blanket extends over the mat, it is light compared to the mat—and compared to a conventional sleeping bag—and is substantially open on both sides. Thus, no suffocation danger exists.

As illustrated in Fig. 6, when not in use, the entire sleeping pad 10 and blanket 30 may be rolled, folded, or stuffed into a compact shape for storage. Preferably, there is a storage pouch 20 at or near the bottom edge 16 of the sleeping pad 10, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The preferred

storage pouch 20 is a pocket equal in width to the mat 11 and enclosing a portion of the top surface of the mat 10. Due to the pouch's preferred rectangular shape, the pillow's preferred rectangular shape and the thickness relative to the rest of the mat and the firmness of the pillow relative to the rest of the mat due to the thickness of the mat, and the placement of the hook-and-loop fasteners, the sleeping pad is easy for a child to roll or stuff by himself. As it is "rolled up", the pad 10 tends to flip/fold over in incremental rectangular amounts generally equal to the size of the pillow. This is because of the relative firmness of the pillow and its tendency to fold at the boundary with the mat rather than rolling-up cylindrically. This tends to make it easy and neat for children to roll/fold the pad into the pouch. Also, the sleeping pad, after being rolled/folded or stuffed and secured, is a rectangular sofa-pillow shape—about 2.5 feet by 1 foot by 8 inches—rather than a cylinder or a tube. The flatter sofa-pillow shape stacks and stores easily, as it won't readily roll. Also, a child can use it around the daycare for "circle time," or other lounging or reading time.

The storage pouch 20 is preferably formed on or attached to the mat both during use of the mat as a sleeping pad and also during storage. Thus, there is typically no reason to detach the storage pouch from the mat and no reason to make the storage pouch a separate bag or container. The preferred storage pouch, therefore, is integral with the mat and is not detachable. The preferred storage pouch comprises an underside or lower half 120 which is the bottom end of the mat, and an upper half 220, which is a flap of soft or cushioning material extending forward over the mat, and being secured at its side edges to the edges of the mat. With the bottom (rear) edge of the pouch upper half being attached to or integral with the mat, the side edges of the upper half being attached to or integral with the mat, and the front edge 24 being unattached to the mat, the upper half forms a pouch with the mat by surrounding and defining interior space 25.

In the preferred storage pouch 20, there is a strip of hook-and-loop fastener (hereinafter "pouch closure strip 21") just inside the top edge 24. A cooperating strip of hook-and-loop fastener (hereinafter "back closure strip 22") is located on the back of the mat 11, preferably at about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way from the top end toward the bottom end of the mat. The preferred back closure strip 22 has "loops" so that it will not catch on carpet fibers when the sleeping pad 10 is unrolled. Thus, the preferred pouch closure strip 22 has "hooks." The sleeping pad 10 and blanket 30 roll up from the top edge toward the bottom edge and are stuffed into the interior 25 of the storage pouch 20. This brings the back closure strip 22 into position to cooperate with and

attach to the pouch closure strip 21, shutting the sleeping pad 10 and blanket 30 inside the storage pouch. During this procedure, the hook and loop fastener 32 on the blanket 30 will be removed from the strip 21 so that the back closure strip 22 may take its place. With the preferred loop fastener for securing the back of the mat to the upper half 220 of the pouch being located
5 nearer the bottom end of the mat than the top end, and with the mat being rollable into the pouch, the pouch may close around substantially all of the mat, that is, with all of the mat enclosed inside the pouch except the bottom portion of the mat which forms the lower half 120 of the pouch.

A handle 23 is preferably placed at the bottom edge 16 of the sleeping pad 10. Placed
10 there, the handle 23 may be used whether the sleeping pad 10 is rolled up or not.

Referring to Figs. 5a, 5b, and 5c, the preferred blanket 30 is roughly rectangular with small rectangular cutouts 34 in the corners at the foot of the blanket 30 creating an extension 31 that is narrow relative to the full width of the blanket. A narrow strip of hook-and-loop fastener (hereinafter "blanket attachment strip 32") is placed on the top side of the extension, as shown in
15 Figs. 5b and 5c. This cooperates with the pouch closure strip 21 to attach the blanket 30 to the sleeping pad 10. Because the preferred pouch closure strip 21 has "hooks," the preferred blanket attachment strip 32 has "loops." This arrangement is advantageous because it allows the user to extend his feet into the interior 25 of storage pouch 20 preserving the portion of the mat 11 covered by the storage pouch 20, which also reduces the likelihood that the user will kick the
20 blanket 30 off while sleeping. This also gives the user a sense of security by having his/her feet in the pouch without his/her legs or upper body being "trapped" inside a "bag" (as is the feeling given by many conventional sleeping bags). This also helps reduce production costs by reducing the size of the required blanket 30 because it need not be long enough to reach from the pillow 12 to the base of the mat 11. Tucking the blanket 30 into the interior 25 of storage pouch 20
25 reduces the likelihood that the user's feet will catch on the edge of the blanket 30 or storage pouch 20 and break the connection. As described above, when the sleeping pad 10 is rolled up, the blanket attachment strip 32 must be disconnected from the pouch closure strip 21 so that the pouch closure strip 21 can connect to the back closure strip 22.

As illustrated in Fig. 3, the preferred blanket 30 is wider than the mat 11 by about four to
30 six inches so that it extends past the edges of the mat when occupied, except for the extension 31, which is slightly narrower. Two small patches of hook-and-loop fastener (hereinafter "blanket

corner attachments 33”) are preferably placed near each corner 35 at the foot of the blanket 30, as shown in Figs. 5a and 5c. The blanket corner attachments 33 cooperate with hook-and-loop patches on the back of the mat, as described below.

Figure 4 displays certain features on the back of the mat 11. Two patches of hook-and-loop fastener (hereinafter “back attachment patches 13”) are located on the back of the mat 11 near the sides and a short distance further from the bottom edge 16 of the mat 11 than the top edge 24 of the storage pouch 20. The back attachment patches 13 cooperate with the blanket corner attachments 33 when the blanket 30 is attached to the sleeping pad 10 via the pouch closure strip 21 and the blanket attachment strip 32. The preferred blanket 30 is generally wider than the mat 11 allowing the blanket corners 35 to wrap under the mat 11 and bring the blanket corner attachments 33 into contact with the back attachment patches 13. However, preferably, the top blanket corners 36 and the sides of the blanket 30, other than bottom corners 35, are preferably not tucked under the mat 11. This additional attachment between the blanket 30 and sleeping pad 10 strengthens the connection between these two pieces. Additionally, securing the corners makes it less likely that the blanket will slip off the side of the user during sleep. Preferably, the blanket corner attachments 33 are “loops” so that the blanket corner attachments 33 do not catch on the blanket 30, mat 11, other items with which it may be washed, or other surfaces, such as a carpeted floor.

Because the preferred blanket corner attachments 33 are “loops,” the preferred back attachment patches 13 are “hooks.” This creates the potential for the back attachment patches 13 to catch on carpeting during use, which can damage the carpet and the back attachment patches 13 when the sleeping pad 10 is moved. To eliminate this problem, small flaps with hook-and-loop fastener (hereinafter “back attachment patch covers 14”) are positioned next to the back attachment patches 13. The back attachment patch covers 14 are attached to the back of the mat 11 on only one side so that they can be moved over or away from the back attachment patches 13 as needed. When the blanket corner attachments 33 are not connected to the back attachment patches 13, back attachment patch covers 14 fold over and cooperatively attach to the back attachment patches 13, completely covering them.

The detachable blanket allows a daycare to easily wash and dry the blanket without the need to wash and dry the larger mat with it. A parent may easily take the blanket home to wash, or because the child wants his blanket with him over night.

Further, the invented sleeping pad may include a pillow cover that is thin, lightweight—making it easier to launder—and easily detached, wherein the pillow cover is a small sheet attached via hook-and-loop fasteners to the top of the pillow area where a child will have his face—i.e., nose and mouth—covering substantially all the pillow area and adapted to be quite
5 secure so the child's face or hand won't slide underneath it. Then, the daycare or parent can wash the pillow cover, as well as the blanket. Alternatively, the pillow cover may be a pillow case attached over the end of the mat.

Although the invention has been illustrated in use by a young child, embodiments may be of any size, whether small enough for an infant or large enough for an adolescent or adult,
10 without exceeding the scope of the invention. Also, the invention may be embodied in any type of material that is sufficiently durable and comfortable. Preferably, the material should be machine washable and dryable. Embodiments for a daycare setting may include a rip-stop nylon on the bottom surface of the mat for durability; a more supple polyester or other cloth for the top of the mat; and a soft fleece for the upper half of the pouch, the blanket, and the optional pillow
15 cover. The padding inside is preferably thick, soft, and comforting—for example, two layers of 220 grams per square meter hollow fiberfill polyester batting. A third or fourth lay may be added for the pillow area. This lightweight material is preferred so that even a small child can carry the sleeping pad.

The preferred means for attaching various parts of the invention to each other are hook-
20 and-loop fasteners, as they are easy for children to use and very safe. Therefore, there are preferably no ties, zippers, or snaps, especially in embodiments for small children. However, in embodiments for adults, numerous other means could be substituted without exceeding the scope of the invention. For example, snaps could be used throughout; straps or ties could be used to shut the sleeping pad and blanket inside the storage pouch or could be used without any storage
25 pouch. Other well known fasteners, such as buttons or zippers, could be substituted for hook-and-loop fasteners without exceeding the scope of the invention.

Although this invention has been described above with reference to particular means, materials, and embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to these disclosed particulars, but extends instead to all equivalents within the scope of the following
30 claims.